

DEMOCRATIC EROSION CONSORTIUM

Position Opening: Curriculum Developer (Consultant)

Overview:

To address the growing crisis of democratic erosion worldwide, the [Democratic Erosion Consortium \(DEC\)](#) was created to develop partnerships among a diverse set of stakeholders—academics, students, funders, policymakers, and practitioners—through which data, theories, research questions, and practices can be discussed, evaluated, and improved with the goal of deepening understanding of democratic erosion and evidence-based strategies for mitigating it.

The DEC's activities fall under four main pillars:

- (1) improve education on democratic erosion for academics, policymakers, and practitioners;
- (2) document democratic erosion trends and dynamics by building a unique dataset;
- (3) marshal existing research through policy briefs and workshops to inform more evidence-based interventions; and
- (4) foster learning, discussion, and academic-practitioner partnerships.

The DEC recently received a large grant that is enabling it to dramatically scale up its activities over the next three years. In particular, and under Pillar 1, we will expand and improve a semester-long course on democratic erosion for university students, develop a new short course on democratic erosion aimed at policymakers and practitioners, and generate free online content on topics related to democratic erosion for the general public. We are now seeking a Curriculum Developer to lead these efforts.

Detailed Position Description and Scope of Work:

The Curriculum Developer Consultant will be responsible for two main outputs: 1) revising the university course; and 2) creating the short course for practitioners and policymakers with associated free online content for the public. The same candidate could be responsible for both outputs or the position could be divided between two candidates.

The position will begin immediately and last throughout Spring 2024 so that all materials are ready by summer 2024 with the new course launched by our network of universities in Fall 2024.

University Course:

Since fall 2017, faculty at [more than 60 universities](#) have taught a semester-long collaborative course on democratic erosion using the same [shared syllabus](#). The Curriculum Developer will play a key role in expanding and improving on the course by developing a coherent but flexible university curriculum accompanied by standardized lesson plans that can be adapted to fit any course format (e.g., lecture or seminar) and at any level (e.g. undergraduate or graduate).

To this end, the Curriculum Developer (CD) will:

- Compile lesson plans and other pedagogical resources from all instructors who have taught the course in the past.
- Use these resources to create an improved, expanded, and standardized version of the course that can be disseminated at no cost to faculty around the world.
- The standardized course will include readings, lecture slides, discussion questions, in-class activities, and take-home assignments that faculty can adapt to meet the needs of their students. It will also include collaborative assignments and joint activities involving faculty and students at multiple institutions, and the Democratic Erosion simulation, an immersive online platform developed specifically for the consortium in which students are assigned to play the role of political and media stakeholders in a fictitious country that is experiencing signs of democratic decay.
- At all stages, the CD will work to make sure content represents the experiences of marginalized communities and is accessible to students from diverse socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds.

The following are the concrete deliverables for the university course:

- Generate a core curriculum with syllabus, readings, lesson plans, and potential cross-institutional collaborative activities, for the following course formats at the undergraduate level:
 - 13-week introductory lecture course (e.g., for first-year undergraduates)
 - 13-week advanced lecture course (e.g., for seniors)
 - 13-week introductory seminar
 - 13-week advanced seminar (e.g., for seniors)
- Produce guidelines and recommendations that will help faculty adapt the course to the quarter system.
- Produce a final report with any additional observations, recommendations, and resources, and that explains the different pedagogical decisions the CD made in developing the course materials and structure.

Short Course and Public Content:

In addition to the semester-long university course, DEC will create a Democratic Erosion short course tailored to the needs and interests of practitioners and policymakers working at the frontline of democracy promotion. The aim is to build on the existing university curriculum, but make it more accessible and user-friendly for a non-academic audience. This output will also entail creating free online content for the general public.

To this aim, the Curriculum Developer will:

- Define the format and content of the short course (collaborating with our key practitioner partner)
- Design a condensed syllabus featuring readings by leading scholars of democratic erosion and a series of shorter essays or blog posts synthesizing lessons learned from DEC faculty and student research.
- Develop short course materials including podcasts and YouTube videos featuring lectures or conversations with DEC faculty and students.
- Coordinate to translate as many short course materials as possible into multiple languages to make them accessible to practitioners based outside the US.
- Adapt these short course materials to serve as the basis for free online content on topics related to democratic erosion that will be available to the public writ large. This will include identifying topics that will have the broadest public appeal, then revising and expanding our existing pedagogical materials for general public consumption.

The following are the concrete deliverables for the short course:

- Curriculum for an online-only short course, able to be completed in roughly one weekend, aimed at a non-academic audience of policymakers and practitioners.
- The curriculum should include readings, audio and video content, writing or reflection prompts, and any other material the CD deems appropriate, along with detailed instructions for self-directed individual or group learning.
- Adapt these materials to produce online publicly-available content.
- Produce a final report with any additional observations, recommendations, and resources, and that explains the different pedagogical decisions the CD made in developing the short course materials and structure.

Skills and Experience:

- Expertise in democracy and/or democratic erosion
- Experience teaching on themes related to democracy and/or democratic erosion in a university course and/or for non-academic audiences
- Experience developing new course content and pedagogy strategies for a university and/or non-academic audience
- Expertise in pedagogy strategies for reaching diverse audiences and multiple learning styles
- Past involvement in teaching the democratic erosion course through the DEC consortium (preferred)
- PhD in political science, sociology, public policy, or a related field (preferred)

Timeline and Compensation:

This is a short-term consultancy position envisioned to begin immediately and lasting no more than six months. The compensation is \$25,000 for the university course and \$15,000 for the short course and public content.

To Apply:

Please submit a CV and cover letter to Julie Anne Weaver, Research Director of the Democratic Erosion Consortium, at julianneweaver@fas.harvard.edu. Please indicate in your cover letter whether you are interested in the university course, short course, or both; your availability and preferred start date; and discuss how your skills and previous experience are relevant to the position.